



INFOPACK

Villa Elba, Finland

11.-17.10.2026

A.C.T.

***An exchange that brings
together youth council
members from around Europe***



Youth exchange in Villa Elba, Finland

11.-17.10.2026

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Welcome to Villa Elba!

Step into a shared European space where young people don't just talk about change, but shape it together. This youth exchange brings together youth council members from across Europe to explore concrete actions for local change and meaningful youth participation. Through hands-on activities, discussions, and peer learning, participants will share how youth councils work in their communities and what makes them effective.

Alongside the programme, participants will enjoy Finnish nature and culture through shared experiences and local activities. Evenings will be time to slow down, share stories, food, music, and laughter, and celebrate the cultures and friendships that grow alongside our work for local change.

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Youth Centre Villa Elba

Villa Elba is a National Youth Centre supported and observed by the Ministry of Education. We are specialised in youth work and our function is to develop the methods used in the field of youth work. We work under the Finnish law covering youth work and by the Ministry of Education.

Our goal is to offer youngsters the possibilities of learning in multicultural environment and finding their own strengths and abilities through international activity.

Our work consists of international camps and programs, education, practical training and voluntary work for young people, information and guidance about international programmes, projects and coordination of volunteering projects.



Youth exchange

Our activity will be organized in
International Youth Centre Villa Elba,
Finland
(Address: Sannanrannantie 60, 67200
Kokkola)

DATES: 11.-17.10.2026

(11.10. and 17.10. are travel days)



The programme will be based on non-formal education and learning-by-doing approaches. The working methods used during the exchange will encourage active participation, open communication, and the sharing of experiences between youth council members. Sessions will largely be peer-led and encourage teamwork, discussion, and reflection.



During the project



Interactive workshops - Workshops will combine indoor and outdoor methods and focus on concrete actions for local change. Through simulations, group work, creative tasks, and peer-led sessions, participants will share real examples from their youth councils, test ideas, and explore practical tools for youth participation and influence.

Sauna - Experiencing the Finnish sauna is an essential part of the programme. The sauna offers time to relax after active days, strengthen group cohesion, and experience an important part of Finnish culture.

Local action activity - As part of the exchange, participants will work together on a small project that creates a positive local impact in Kokkola. This may involve contributing to a community space or developing content for youth participation, as example. The exact form of the activity will be decided together by the participating groups during the preparation phase.

City visit to Kokkola - Participants will visit the centre of Kokkola to become familiar with the local context. The visit may include exploring the old town, cultural sites, public spaces, or youth-related services. There will also be time for freetime in the town.

Nature walks - Participants will explore nearby forests and coastal paths around Villa Elba. Along the way, guided discussions and reflection exercises will focus on community, participation, and the role of shared public spaces in young people's lives.

Cultral evenings - Evenings will be dedicated to sharing culture through food, music, games and laughter.

and many more!



Learning outcomes

While taking part in the exchange, participants will develop knowledge about youth participation, local democracy, and concrete actions for local change. They will learn how youth councils work in different European contexts and explore practical tools such as participatory budgeting, youth representation, and digital participation methods. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of how young people can influence decision-making at the local level.

Skills - Participants will strengthen their communication, social, teamwork, and leadership skills through group work, shared responsibilities, and living together in an international environment. They will learn to express their ideas, listen to different viewpoints, and work constructively with others. Language skills in English and participants' own languages will be strengthened through daily collaboration. The exchange will encourage young people to take initiative, think critically, and realise that small actions can create meaningful local change.

Attitudes and values- Participants will become more open-minded, internationally oriented, and active citizens. Sharing experiences and living together will foster respect for diversity, cooperation, responsibility, and motivation to engage in their communities.



Shared planning and ownership

Shared planning is a key part of this exchange and one of the main ways participants learn by doing.

From the very beginning, young people will be involved in shaping the programme together, sharing ideas, deciding priorities, and building a common vision for the week.

Each participating group will be responsible for creating and facilitating 1-2 workshops or activities lasting 2-3 hours each. The theme, type of activity, and its place in the schedule will be discussed and agreed on during the 2-3 planning meetings. These meetings will be attended by leaders and at least some, if not all, participants, giving everyone a real voice in how the exchange takes shape.

To keep communication easy, a shared Discord channel will be set up for the exchange. This space will be used to connect, plan activities, ask questions, or share ideas before, during, and after the exchange, helping to build teamwork and group spirit across countries.

In addition, each group will host one cultural evening where they can introduce their country or city. Through games, music, dances, and stories, participants will share what makes their culture special, with local foods as a must. These evenings are all about laughter, curiosity, and creating shared memories together.



Examples

The Finnish group has proposed several sub-topics that could be explored during the exchange as examples of concrete youth participation and local change. These include the role of a youth council that has real influence, as well as youth councils having seats or representation in different decision-making bodies and institutions.

Other suggested topics are participatory budgeting, where young people can vote on how public money is used for issues that matter to them, such as summer jobs or youth mental health. Digital participation tools, like online Voxit polls, are also seen as an interesting way to involve more young people in sharing opinions and influencing local decisions.

In addition, the Finnish group has highlighted youth gathering places as important spaces for participation, community, and inclusion. A possible focus on how youth voices connect to national-level decision-making, such as through a visit to the Finnish Parliament, has also been suggested as a relevant theme for the exchange.

Participant profile

Participants should be between the ages of 15-19 years old and be a member of a regional youth council. Each organization can bring 10 participants and 2 leaders. Leaders must be 18+ and have knowledge and experience of youth exchanges.



Hosting organisation

Youth Centre Villa Elba

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Find out more about Villa Elba:

<https://www.villaelba.fi/en/>



Practical arrangements

Accommodation:

During the project, participants will live in Youth Centre Villa Elba. The accommodation is in our warm and cozy cottages. Cottages have all necessary equipment for living. It requires patience and flexibility as participants will share the cottage with other people during the whole exchange.



All meals are served in Villa Elba Cafe.

Villa Elba provides bed sheets and one towel, so no need to bring those :)

Rules:

We will go through Villa Elba rules and all safety measures. The group leaders make sure that the participants understand and follow all the rules. All types of intoxicants are forbidden during the exchange.

Villa Elba is a fragrance-free youth centre so we ask that guests refrain from using perfumes, strongly scented laundry detergent, or other strong scents.

Checklist what to bring

☐

Your passport or European identity card

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European Health Insurance card or travel insurance – this is critical! We do not provide and are not liable for any incidents.

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Travel tickets

Please remember to keep all original tickets, boarding passes and invoices as without them we cannot reimburse the travel costs.

☐

Medication

For preventive reasons, we recommend for those who have health problems to bring their own medicine. Our Youth Centre is not allowed to give any pills, only first-aid help.

☐

Swimsuit for the sauna

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Warm and comfortable clothes and shoes

The weather in Finland in October is already chilly, with anywhere between -1 and 10°C being in the normal range.

☐

Traditional snacks, drinks, food and music

To learn as much as possible from each other's culture, we will organize an intercultural evening, where you get to share some of your local specialties with the other participants.

☐

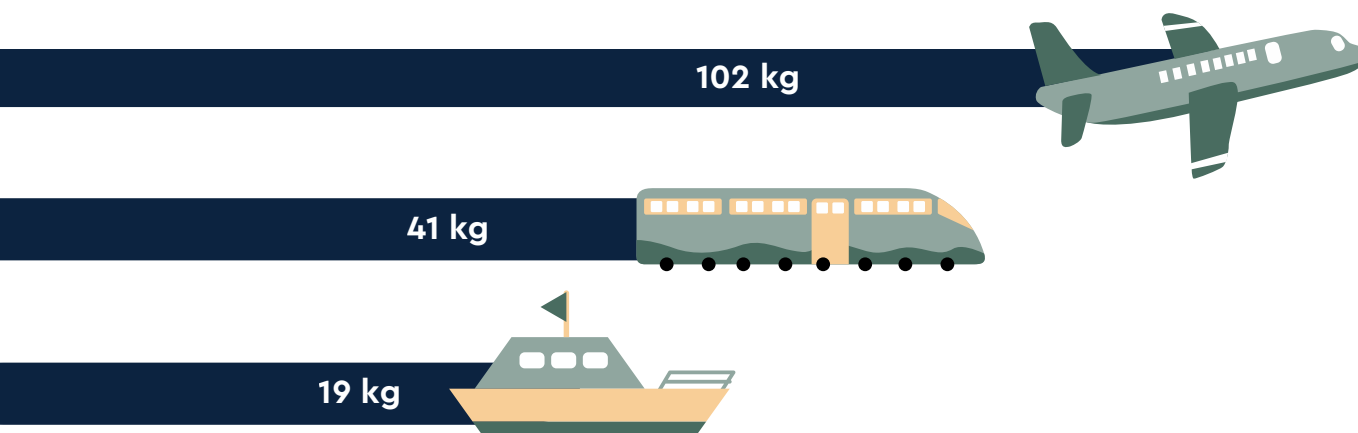
Good spirit and positive attitude!

Tips for travelling to Kokkola:

How to get to Kokkola:

We encourage groups to use green means of transportation, for example with Interrail ticket (more information: <https://www.interrail.eu/en>), but we understand that it might be difficult for some people. If you have to fly to Helsinki, please remember about sustainability and pay extra fee for CO2 emissions.

CO2 EMISSIONS IN COMPARISON *



TRAVELLING BY TRAIN/FERRY WILL LOWER YOUR CO2 EMISSIONS BY MORE THAN HALF

*** 1000 KILOMETERS**

From Helsinki Airport the most convenient and green way to travel to Kokkola is by train. You can find tickets here: <https://www.vr.fi/en>

! We recommend to buy tickets in advance because prices are increasing dramatically closer to departure day

If you are taking train from Helsinki Airport, then on your way there will be one short transfer at Tikkurila station. Please, be very careful and check all the information: train track number etc. in order not to miss the train. There are displays everywhere as well as information via speakers.

Travel support

Travel grants are paid according to the funding rules of Erasmus+: Travel grants depend on the length of the journey and for measurement of the journey we use Erasmus+ distance band calculator: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/distance-calculator_en

Travel grants

Standard travel:

10 – 99 km	23 €
100 – 499 km	180 €
500 –1999 km	275 €
2000 – 2999 km	360 €
3000 – 3999 km	530 €
4000 – 7999 km	820 €
8000 –> km	1500 €

Green travel:

100 – 499 km	210 €
500 –1999 km	320 €
2000 – 2999 km	410 €
3000 – 3999 km	610 €
4000 – 7999 km	820 €
8000 –> km	1500 €

Payments

Villa Elba makes payments only through bank transfers after receiving all original travel documents (invoices, boarding passes, train tickets etc.) and leader's reporting obligations to the EU Comission.



Hopefully, this infopack helped you to get to know more about what to expect. You are about to start an amazing adventure so don't hesitate and participate in everything! We have a very supportive staff, in case you have any kind of questions - you are more than welcome to ask.

See you at Villa Elba!

www.villaelba.fi

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**EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
CORPS**

